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Community structure of woody plants on islands along a bioclimatic gradient

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Abstract. Understanding patterns of community structure and the causes for their variation can be furthered by comparative biogeographic analyses of island biotas. We used woody plant data at the local scale to investigate variations in species rarity, alpha, beta, and gamma diversity within and between three islands from the oceanic archipelagoes of Azores, Canaries and Mascarene. We used standardized protocols to sample ten 50 m × 50 m forest plots in each of the three islands with contrasting climate and regional species pools: Terceira (Azores), Tenerife (Canaries), and Reunion (Mascarene Islands). Occupancy frequency distributions and species abundance distributions were used to investigate rarity. The partitioning of beta diversity in a distance-decay framework was used to test for spatial patterns of community composition. Rarity was much more pronounced in the highly diverse islands of Tenerife and Reunion than in the regionally poorer island of Terceira. The number of species rose faster with increasing sample area in both Tenerife and Reunion. The slope of the species rank abundance curve was steeper in Terceira whereas the richer island assemblages approached a lognormal model. Compositional changes according to spatial distance were mostly due to replacement of species in Terceira and Reunion. Our results point to important differences in the community structure of Terceira, which is the less diverse and temperate region in comparison to Tenerife and Reunion which are highly diverse.

Key words: Beta diversity partition, distance-decay, islands, rarity, species abundance distribution (SAD), species area relationship (SAR)

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a high biological diversity and is a biodiversity hotspot in the Macaronesian region (Fernández-Palacios and Q Z J) © I i o E ô & v Z o C U j } - v i X D • o } v P • š } š Z D • O E / v o v ~ u E D • U š O E } % o archipelago located in the southwestern Indian Ocean known for its high level of diversity (Thébaud et al. S j i j ô U j O E s o X i i • X Z • š Z O E • o v A • O E sampled using the same methods, giving us the unique } % o % o } O E \$ u j w j A G Y P A Z v B Z š Z E • O E A % o © O E v • u u u v j š š O E u š O E v • j • š A v š Z P S G • % o © O E (A • O E j Y v % o v j A O E j k š O W ~ i š Z • % o j • • u o P v • O E j v j A O E s Q temperate to tropical regions (Brown 2014, Xu et al. q i i ñ • v ~ i š Z š Z j v G u v j (O E O E % o j v taxonomic diversity increases from temperate to tropical O E P j } v u i o ô i U š P š o i X i i • X } O E • • š Z • u • Y j A • U v o C • v } u % o O E A O E o e s u % o } O E š • v O E j % o š } O E u v j š š O E u š š O Z W } u % o v C r (O E j š O E j C u j Y k } • • ~ i š Z • % o l • r u v j v š O E j u Y k } v A • Y P š š A j } O E u j O E O E j š O X U v v u v v • V ~ i š Z v • š • % o l • r O E o Y j v š j Z j A o o • Y P š m š Z • % o Y o o j } (R E O E j š G v š Z % o O E Y Y j v j v P of beta diversity using a distance-decay framework to • š • š (} O E • % o Y o % o © O E v • j v } u u u v j š E C

across the three study islands were selected. Study

Ten 50 m x 50 m square plots were established between plots within the same mountain chain of size considered adequate to obtain measures of diversity that are independent of gamma diversity for square subplots were also delimited in which we counted all woody species shoots with a diameter

Data analyses

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were implemented in R version 3.1.0 (R Core Team
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minimum and maximum number of species per plot
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restricted to indigenous species (i.e., endemics pl
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overall abundance.

We considered two forms of rarity: incidence (species
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To study incidence-based rarity, the occurrence
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Species incidences within an island were measured
as the number of plots where a species was recorded
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and compared the following SAD models: the geometric series, the log-series, the Poisson lognormal

of the niche hypervolumes (measured by speci-
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the most abundant to the least abundant species
Among all proposed SAD models, the geomet
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The lognormal is one of the most commonly used distributions for abundance data. It assumes that the logarithmic abundances are distributed normally. In the gambin model, based on the gambin model, the lognormal distribution is used to model the abundance of species in a community. The lognormal distribution is a continuous probability distribution that is skewed to the right. It is often used to model the abundance of species in a community, as it can handle the large range of values and the skewness of the data. The lognormal distribution is defined by two parameters: the mean and the standard deviation of the logarithmic abundances. The mean is the average of the logarithmic abundances, and the standard deviation is the square root of the variance of the logarithmic abundances. The lognormal distribution is a continuous probability distribution that is skewed to the right. It is often used to model the abundance of species in a community, as it can handle the large range of values and the skewness of the data. The lognormal distribution is defined by two parameters: the mean and the standard deviation of the logarithmic abundances. The mean is the average of the logarithmic abundances, and the standard deviation is the square root of the variance of the logarithmic abundances.

normal at a log scale of abundance (Ugland et al. 2007,

Two main methods were employed to plot and model the species' abundances in which data were binned by rank one corresponds to the species with the highest abundance, rank two corresponding to the species with the second highest abundance, and so on. As a method to determine the best SAD model for any given curves indicate lower evenness. The rank abundance

curves indicate lower evenness. The fundamental geometric series because if a log scale is used for abundance, the species fall exactly along a straight line. The species abundance a_i is the species abundance, b_0 and b_1 are the intercept and slope of the regression line, respectively. It is possible to use the regression slope to compare the three datasets. The geometric series was modelled using un-binned "species rank abundance plots". However, the three datasets cannot be directly compared because they exhibit different shapes. The number of 715 individuals, which corresponds to the minimum number of individuals in Tenerife. An OLS comparison between islands. Regression comparisons were assessed by performing an overall analysis of variance. The values using the R package multcomp (Hothorn et al.

binned data. Bins were constructed using base-10
 with the lowest AIC value was considered the best
 the lowest AIC were considered to have equivalent
 as sampling units. Our nested SARs are similar to the

of beta diversity in Reunion, which can impact on the other two islands. Beta diversity in Reunion was the value of the slope, led us to restrict the analyses for Reunion to only four plots located within a 12 km than Tenerife. The density of woody plants in Terceira range, similar to the range covered by the 10 plots in Terceira and Tenerife. Thus, when we compared the slopes, between the three islands, we avoided

between plots in Reunion. The ten plots in Reunion. Alpha is the mean number of species in the ten plots. Max and Min alpha is the maximum and minimum number of species found in the ten plots, respectively. N is the number of individuals.

	Terceira	Tenerife	Reunion
Gamma	2186	715	1497
Alpha	7.3	7.4	25.6
Beta	0.51	1.16	1.61
Max alpha	9	9	33
Min alpha	5	5	16

the observed average distance was below the 0.025 and abundance data.

of wood plant rarity. In Terceira, only 18% of woody plant species occur in one plot whilst 45% occur in all ten plots (Tokeshi test). 38% of the species only occur in one plot whereas only 9% occur in all ten plots (Tokeshi test). 25% of the plant species occurring in only one plot and 3% occurring in all 10 plots (Tokeshi test).

regressed against the geographical distance between plots. The Mantel tests using the R package vegan (Oksanen et al., 2007) and distance was tested using the R Package simba (Borges et al., 2018).

Results

Alpha, beta and gamma diversity patterns

93 woody plant species were sampled across thirty plots. Tenerife had very similar values of average alpha diversity

Table 1. Diversity metrics for woody vascular plants

	Terceira	Tenerife	Reunion
Gamma	2186	715	1497
Alpha	7.3	7.4	25.6
Beta	0.51	1.16	1.61
Max alpha	9	9	33
Min alpha	5	5	16

Rarity

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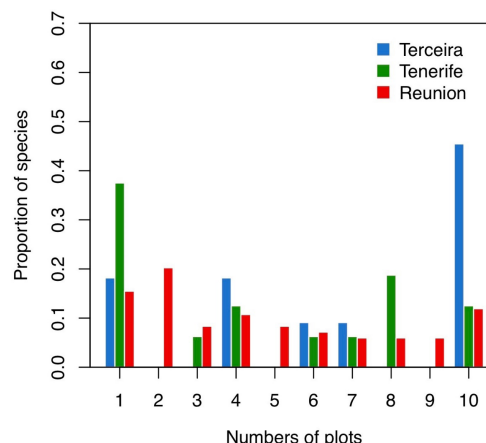


Figure 1. Proportion of species versus the number of plots for Terceira, Tenerife, and Reunion.

observed OFD, suggests the occurrence of many more species in the sampled plots than in the unsampled plots. This may result from the for tropical systems and further exacerbated by the fact that sampling areas are ecologically uniform. The high z-value for the relationship between species richness and area in the sampled plots of Tenerife may be explained by the presence of both very rare species and species that are rare in the sampled plots because they are more strictly associated with within an island. On the contrary, in Tenerife we did not observe other unsampled habitat types.

Regarding our SAD analyses, it is well known that species diversity and distance, which may be a consequence of the complex orography of Anaga.

of tree species in the Amazon account for half of all species in the sampled plots. The complex orography of Anaga may be related to the fact that we were dealing with a species-poor biota of the Azores, constrained by recent geological history and low environmental diversity. The authors wish to thank to the following people for their help in the field: Salvador de La Cruz, Carla Díaz, Sara Ravagni, Benito Vispo, Guillermo Sánchez, Isabel Sancibrián, Nuria Mollaret, Fanny Veinante, Laura Doutre, Dominique Veinante, and the staff of the Azores Regional Government. This work was funded by Direção Regional do Ambiente (DRD) through the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) and by the work of LBD in this manuscript was performed within the scope of the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) funded by the Azores Regional Government.

individual trees, and the SAD follows an approximate log-series distribution. The authors wish to thank to the following people for their help in the field: Salvador de La Cruz, Carla Díaz, Sara Ravagni, Benito Vispo, Guillermo Sánchez, Isabel Sancibrián, Nuria Mollaret, Fanny Veinante, Laura Doutre, Dominique Veinante, and the staff of the Azores Regional Government. This work was funded by Direção Regional do Ambiente (DRD) through the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) and by the work of LBD in this manuscript was performed within the scope of the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) funded by the Azores Regional Government.

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were best approximated by models that have more species. The authors wish to thank to the following people for their help in the field: Salvador de La Cruz, Carla Díaz, Sara Ravagni, Benito Vispo, Guillermo Sánchez, Isabel Sancibrián, Nuria Mollaret, Fanny Veinante, Laura Doutre, Dominique Veinante, and the staff of the Azores Regional Government. This work was funded by Direção Regional do Ambiente (DRD) through the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) and by the work of LBD in this manuscript was performed within the scope of the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) funded by the Azores Regional Government.

Regarding the gambin model, communities dominated by rare species are expected to have low species richness. This research was supported by the ERA-Net Biodiversity and Ecosystems (BIOCON) project. The authors wish to thank to the following people for their help in the field: Salvador de La Cruz, Carla Díaz, Sara Ravagni, Benito Vispo, Guillermo Sánchez, Isabel Sancibrián, Nuria Mollaret, Fanny Veinante, Laura Doutre, Dominique Veinante, and the staff of the Azores Regional Government. This work was funded by Direção Regional do Ambiente (DRD) through the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) and by the work of LBD in this manuscript was performed within the scope of the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) funded by the Azores Regional Government.

as in the case of Terceira. In contrast, Tenerife, which has a few more species and lower impact of the most dominant ones, has an intermediate value of species richness. The authors wish to thank to the following people for their help in the field: Salvador de La Cruz, Carla Díaz, Sara Ravagni, Benito Vispo, Guillermo Sánchez, Isabel Sancibrián, Nuria Mollaret, Fanny Veinante, Laura Doutre, Dominique Veinante, and the staff of the Azores Regional Government. This work was funded by Direção Regional do Ambiente (DRD) through the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) and by the work of LBD in this manuscript was performed within the scope of the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) funded by the Azores Regional Government.

in richness. This means that, overall, the more distant islands have higher species richness. The authors wish to thank to the following people for their help in the field: Salvador de La Cruz, Carla Díaz, Sara Ravagni, Benito Vispo, Guillermo Sánchez, Isabel Sancibrián, Nuria Mollaret, Fanny Veinante, Laura Doutre, Dominique Veinante, and the staff of the Azores Regional Government. This work was funded by Direção Regional do Ambiente (DRD) through the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) and by the work of LBD in this manuscript was performed within the scope of the project "Biodiversidade e Conservação da Natureza" (BIOCON) funded by the Azores Regional Government.

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PAVB, PC, BCE, CT, PO, DS, RBE, JMFP and JCC conceived the study design and sampling program. RBE, AJP, JMFP, RO, SFL, LN, JCC, AMS and DS performed

with the help of FR, LDB, LBD, TM, IRA, MF, JCC, RBE, JMFP, PO, CT, DS, BCE. All authors commented on the

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- Supporting Information
- Appendix S1 – /v({œu Ÿ}v }μš šZ •]š •
- Appendix S2 - Dataset.